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A BRIEF COMMENTARY ON THE EASTERN QUESTION

BY

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"THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY"
"AN ELEMENTARY DISCOURSE ON THE RIGHT OF INTERVENTION"



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By VAHAN CARDASHIAN

PREFACE

Part of the preface from the author's book on "The Ottoman Empire of the Twentieth Century."

The "Eastern Question" has been for centuries of universal interest, a source of perpetual international complications, and its economic importance to the world at large cannot be overestimated.

My views have not been influenced by any ulterior motive in the execution of this work. I do not represent any society or association. I have endeavored to present the conditions, and the influences that have created and sustain those conditions, impartially, fearlessly, and relying upon my actual experience, knowledge, observation, belief and information. I have probably departed from the usual policy of the foreign writer on the subject, in that I have spared no nation or person in praise or condemnation as deserved, and have not yielded to the temptation of exonerating or justifying this or that cabinet or party. I wanted to emphasize, for the knowledge of the American and European public, the fact that the duty of Europe in Turkey is not a purely humanitarian or honorary one; but one that is imposed upon the nations that constitute the "concert of that Continent" by treaties and conventions, for which they have received and are receiving full and liberal consideration. I have not hesitated to lay stress upon the inherent barbarity of the Turk; and with equal frankness, I have striven to show the perfidious and chauvinistic diplomacy of Europe in dealing with the "Eastern Question." It remains with the public to see that THE CIVILIZATION OF THAT COUNTRY IS THE CREATION OF THIS TWO-EDGED, POISONOUS SYSTEM OF TYRANNY AND TRICKERY. I have demonstrated that Europe has never made an earnest and sincere effort to remove the curse, but in blind and fanatical pursuance of an unscrupulous and reprehensible "tug of war" game, has added to and maintained the nuisance. I care not whom the bomb of truth offends or strikes; I have adequate compensation in the unequivocal presentation of Truth.

A BRIEF COMMENTARY ON THE EASTERN QUESTION*

It can truly be said that the "Eastern Question" is coeval with the advent of Christianity. It received great impetus on the rise of Mohammed, for his forces were to contend with the opposing factions. It resolved itself into an important question when Charlemagne fought against the Saracens, and in the successive campaigns of the Crusaders in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries. It forced itself upon the civilized world on the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and caused disastrous conflicts in the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th centuries, and the first three decades of the 19th. Since then it has been the object of several international conferences, and is destined to become one of the most conspicuous and intricate of the world's questions. It is the outstanding question arising from the Eastern world. It is fundamentally an economic question.

When the Ottoman armies, rolling like an irresistible torrent, carried before them all the sovereignties of the Eastern world, extending to Austria, and part of Russia, the newly-rising Muscovite nation was to contend against the formidable invaders for its very existence. With the death of Suleyman in 1566, one of the greatest of the Ottoman conquerors, the Turk occupied a rather defensive than aggressive attitude. So, the future continual Russian aggressions against Turkey can be said to be counterparts of the past Turkish invasions of the infant Russian territory; and the latent ineradicable desire for revenge, fortified by an irresistible passion for expansion and domination, developed itself under the vantage of religious affinity and civilized motives toward the Christian races under the rule of the Sultans. When in 1774, Russia extorted from the Sultan the right of recognition as the protector of the Danubian principalities and the adherents of the Greek church, throughout Turkey, the provincial

*This is substantially an extract from Chapter IV of the author's book on "The Ottoman Empire of the Twentieth Century."

governors were quick to perceive in the submission of the Sultan the dawn of the Russian supremacy, and they unscrupulously indulged in a tyrannical oppression of the Christians. Catherine II became a most avowed foe of the Crescent and determined to install her son on the ancient throne of Byzantium. During her reign Turkey attempted to assume the rôle of protector of Poland as against the Russian encroachments. This audacity was visited with severity by Catherine and paved the way for her glorious advance to the walls of Constantinople, in 1787. Pitt, to preserve the balance of power, allied with Prussia and Holland to arrest the Muscovite march through fear of finding in Russia an insatiable ambition for the conquest of other European sovereignties.

The British policy of 1787, in regard to the East, has been perpetuated with varying underlying causes and motives, now for territorial acquisition and expansion of commerce in Turkey, then for the maintenance of a royal road to India, and other reasons alike regardless of the interests and welfare of the races for whose benefit the right of interference has been exercised.

The beginning of the 19th century is a significant era in the rule of the Ottoman dynasty, in decadence and fast waning power. A desperate revolution attended with mutual atrocities had been in full sway in Greece for years. When the combined armies of Blücher and Wellington forced Napoleon to retire to Elba, and the august Sovereigns of Russia, Prussia and Austria entered into a "Holy Alliance," the Greeks made persistent appeals to them for the cessation of the bloody warfare. Their entreaties were most vigorously resisted by Austria.

The first European mêlée on the "Eastern Question," which had resolved itself into a unity in the sovereignty of the Ottomans over all the Western-Asiatic and part of Eastern-European and North-African territories, arose with the Greek insurrection of 1826. Then, England and Russia drafted a protocol purporting to constitute Greece a tributary state to the Ottoman Empire, which was refused by the Porte by a Manifesto on the 9th of June, 1827. Thereupon, Sir Edward Codrington destroyed the Turkish fleet at Navarino on the 28th

of June, 1827; the French occupied Morea, while the Russians operated from Armenia, and marched to the suburbs of Constantinople on the 15th of August, 1829. The Sultan submitted.

The conference of 3d Feb., 1830, held at London, constituted Greece an independent state. Here, Europe, by common consent, recognized and established the "Eastern Question" as an international question, not to be disturbed, but by the concurrence of that "concert."

EGYPT has been another desirable object of European intervention. This historic and extensive country was wrested from the dominion of the Mameluke rulers by Sultan Selim in 1517, who constituted the governor of Egypt a vassal to the Ottoman throne, with certain semi-sovereign privileges. At one of the most intense periods of the Grecian revolution, Sultan Mahmud, sunk too low in his resources to quell the uprising of the Islanders, was compelled to call for assistance on Mehemet Ali, his Egyptian vassal, who responded promptly. Mehemet placed in command of his son, Ibrahim, a powerful fleet which, in a bloody and devastating campaign, reduced the Greek Peninsula into submission, and thus accelerated the emancipation of a part of Greece. Following the independence of Greece, Mehemet Ali, having asserted himself as a more powerful war lord than his suzerain, demanded his reward for his services in the quelling of the Greek rebellion. The Sultan tendered the island of Crete, which did not satisfy the greed of Mehemet, who, at the head of a formidable army, started the campaign for "the overthrow" of the Ottoman sovereignty. After conquering Syria and Palestine, and crushing decisively the Sultan's army at the valley of Orontes and at the pass of Beylan, he marched, carrying all before him, to Konieh, Asia Minor, and reduced the last remnant of the Ottoman forces, December 21st, 1832. He immediately prepared for the mastery of Constantinople, when Sultan Mahmud appealed to Europe. Russia, to the great displeasure of France, was first to respond. A Russian fleet proceeded to Constantinople, and France intervening, a treaty was concluded at Kutahya, whereby the Sultan surrendered to his vassal, Syria, the provinces of Adana and Candia. This was the first instance of aggression against the Ottoman empire

by a non-Christian foe, which, if it were not for Europe, would have resulted in the extinction of the Turk's power. In consideration of Russia's assistance, the Sultan entered into a treaty of alliance with Russia, at Hunkiar Iskelessi, and therein not only acknowledged the right of Russia to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey, but other exacting articles of the said treaty reduced Turkey to the position of a vassal principality. This aggressive Russian diplomacy angered the British and French courts, and led to the assumption by England of the rôle of protector of the Turkish interests, and of France of those of Mehemet Ali.

The year 1839 is a significant epoch for the Eastern Question. The Sultan attempted to lead a campaign for the punishment of his rebel vassal, but his large army was entirely annihilated at Nisib, on the 24th of June, by Ibrahim, and his fleet deserted to Mehemet Ali. At this critical juncture, the Sultan once more appealed to the conscience of Europe. The treaty concluded in London, on the 15th of July, 1840, reads: "His Highness the Sultan having addressed himself to their Majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary and Bohemia, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of all the Russias, to ask their support and assistance in the difficulties in which he finds himself by reason of the hostile proceedings of Mehemet Ali, pasha of Egypt,—difficulties which threaten with danger the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and the independence of the Sultan's throne . . ."

This treaty restricted Mehemet Ali to the governorship of Egypt, and also gave him the right of rule over Syria, during his lifetime. He refused the said terms; thereupon, the powers bombarded Beyruth and Acre. Under this pressure, Mehemet Ali agreed to evacuate Syria, Candia and Arabia on the 14th Jan., 1841, and to pay the Sultan a tribute of £363,635.

The Sultan saved his throne once more through the assistance of Europe. Thus any concession to the members of that "concert" even derogatory to his sovereignty would not be an ignominious surrender. The members of the "concert" established a right of intervention in the internal affairs of the Sultan, and particularly England and France made it possible to assume control over the finances of the extensive

country of Egypt, neither of which would have come to happen had it not been for the Christian subjects of the Sultan. The occasion of each and every European interference in Turkey and a consequent assertion of a right has been the misrule of the Turk, which has been maintained by the same European diplomacy.

The British encroachment in Egypt began in 1874, when the Khedive, hard-pressed for money, found an eager buyer of his canal shares in the English government. The foreign creditors of Egypt demanded payment; and finally the Egyptian government unified its foreign debt in 1876. This amounted to £91,000,000, and the hypothecated revenue to £6,475,256. The administration of the railways and the Port of Alexandria—thus of the finance of the country—was entrusted to five collectors general: two natives, two English and one French. The establishment of "International Courts" was a part of the scheme, which perfected the work of European domination.

The Firman of the Sultan of August 2, 1879, confirmed the title of "Khedive," and the right of succession. It conferred . . . authority to make laws, non-political conventions, to contract loans, to keep unlimited number of troops and to build ships of war. It fixed the annual tribute at £750,000.

Thereafter, England extended her sphere of influence in Egypt as a remunerative field of investment and for the protection of Suez Canal, the road to India. During 1900, 3,441 vessels, of 9,738,152 tons, passed through the canal, of which 1,905 of 7,389,237 tons were British. The number of passengers who passed through in 1900 was 282,194, the net profits being \$7,863,186, and the amount distributed among the shareholders was \$8,782,760. Rothschild & Sons of London loaned to the Egyptian government \$42,500,000, on Oct. 31, 1878. Certain revolutionary plots and massacres developed in the country in 1881, directed primarily against foreign intrusion, which England suppressed, and established a de facto government in 1883, against the repeated protests of France. Egypt to-day has a nominal head in the "Khedive," who is tributary to the Sultan. The government of the country is under predominant British influence, and eventually, it is destined to become English territory.

In 1856, the persistent Russian claim to have protectorate over the Christians in Turkey, and certain privileges in the Holy places, were construed as a design of aggrandizement, and England, France and Sardinia allied with Turkey against Russia, on the ground that "any further reduction of the Turkish Empire would endanger the equilibrium of power in Europe." They fought the Crimean war. This hasty, ill advised and fruitless conflict cost the belligerents 150,000 men, and \$1,700,000,000, and is one of the most remarkable chapters of the "Eastern Question."

LEBANON, although an uninteresting country, aside from its slight strategical value, being only eighty-four miles long, has been another link in the chain of the Eastern Question that induced frequent European intervention in the Ottoman Empire. Sultan Selim I conquered the country in 1516, and it was governed by Mohammedan Emirs. Upon the evacuation of Syria by Mehemet Ali, in 1841, unrestricted anarchy was rampant in the country. Lord Palmerston in a circular says that "If England with other powers recovered Syria for the Sultan, they expect him to govern humanely." At an international conference held at Constantinople on the 27th June, 1842, certain reform measures were adopted. In 1860, the wholesale massacre of the Maronites by the Druses, through the connivance of the Sultan's government, led to the "Paris Conference," which authorized France to land an army of 10,000 men, on the 16th of August, 1860, for the pacification of the country. This army left in June, 1861. Meanwhile, a commission of the five powers, sitting at Beyruth, adopted a *règlement*, which constituted Lebanon a tributary province to the Sultan, with a Christian governor, to be nominated by the Porte, and approved by the powers. The tribute was fixed at 3,500 purses. The first governor was Daoud Pasha, an Armenian, who was elected for five years and reelected. This closed another chapter of the "Eastern Question."

THE BALKAN PENINSULA has been a smouldering volcano with periodic eruptions, thus offering an apparently excusable ground for European intervention in the "Ottoman Empire."

ROUMANIA is one of the principal geographical divisions of the Balkan Peninsula. The province of Wallachia in 1396,

and Moldavia in 1511, were conquered by the Ottoman rulers, thus extinguishing the Roumanian Independence. Russia, by the treaty of Kainardji, in 1774, and by subsequent conventions with Turkey, secured right of intervention in those provinces; and in 1812, at the Peace of Bucharest, she acquired Moldavia, the province of Bessarabia, and later Wallachia. This was partly superseded, however, by the treaty of Paris, and the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia were declared to be tributary to Turkey, under a Christian governor, to which the Sultan acquiesced quite readily. In 1861 the two provinces united under the name of "The United Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia," which the powers and the Porte recognized in the same year, and Prince Couzo was elected governor for life. He abdicated, however, in 1866, and Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen was elected in April, and invested as hereditary Prince, by the Sultan at Constantinople. Henceforth, they designated the country as "Roumania," which did not receive diplomatic recognition. In 1877, Roumania consented to the passage of the Russian army for the invasion of Turkey, and coöperated in the reduction of Plevna. On May 22d, 1877, the Assembly declared Independence, which was ratified by the treaties of San-Stefano and Berlin. On March 26, 1881, the country assumed the sovereign title of "Kingdom."

SERVIA, another important section of the Balkan Peninsula, was conquered by Mohammed II in 1451. Under the leadership of Kara George, the swineherd, the country recovered semi-independence in 1804, which was affirmed by the Sultan, at the Russo-Turkish treaty of Adrianople, Sept. 4, 1828. An Imperial Firman conferred the title of Prince upon Kara George, August 15, 1830. Serbia declared war against the Sultan June 20, 1876, and sued for peace Feb. 20, 1877. She resumed aggression on the 14th Dec., of the same year, thus adding to the chain of the Ottoman opponents. The treaty of Berlin recognized the independence of Serbia, which assumed the title of "Kingdom" in 1882.

MONTENEGRO was originally a dependency of the Serbian Kingdom. It maintained a courageous struggle against the Turkish aggression until 1623. In 1706 Russia assumed protection of the country, which Austria repudiated. Intense

unrest brewed throughout the country with frequent eruptions against the Turkish rule until 1862, when the Turks attacked the revolutionary bands with an overwhelmingly large army, and imposed terms at the peace of Scutari. The heroic Montenegrins declared war against the Porte on the 2d July, 1876, and prosecuted a brilliant campaign. This 1,700 square miles of mountainous country was recognized as an Independent Principality by the treaty of Berlin.

The year 1876 forms another significant epoch in the history of the Eastern Question. The Ottoman Empire was the center of continual plots, general anarchy, and most shocking atrocities in the Balkans. Sultan Abd-Ul-Aziz was the victim of the palace plot, on the 2d of May, 1876. His brother Murad was installed on the throne August 31, deposed in three months, and succeeded by Hamid II. Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina were delivered over to insurrection and massacre. Russia and the other powers made strong representations at the Porte for the cessation of the atrocities. The reign of terror continued unchecked. The Great Powers, assembled in a conference at London, on the 19th March, 1877, drafted a protocol purporting to pacify and settle the stricken Ottoman districts. The Sultan contemptuously rejected the European note as derogatory to his sovereignty. Thereupon Czar Alexander issued his famous Manifesto on April 23d, declaring war against Turkey.

“Our faithful and beloved subjects know the strong interest we have constantly felt in the destinies of the oppressed Christian population of Turkey. Our desire to ameliorate and assure their lot has been shared by the whole Russian nation, which now shows itself ready to bear fresh sacrifices to alleviate the position of the Christians in the Balkan Peninsula.”

“The blood and property of our faithful subjects have always been dear to us, and our whole reign attests our constant solicitude to preserve to Russia the benefits of peace. This solicitude never failed to actuate us during the deplorable events which occurred in Herzegovina, Bosnia and Bulgaria. Our object before all was to effect amelioration in the position of the Christians in the East by means of pacific

negotiations; and in concert with the Great European Powers, our allies and friends, for two years we have made incessant efforts to induce the Porte to effect such reforms as would protect the Christians in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Bulgaria from the arbitrary measures of local authorities. The accomplishment of these reforms was absolutely stipulated by anterior engagements contracted by the Porte toward the whole of Europe."

"Our efforts, supported by diplomatic representations made in common by the other governments, have not, however, attained their object. The Porte has remained unshaken in its formal refusal of any effective guarantee for the security of its Christian subjects, and has rejected the conclusions of the Constantinople conference. Wishing to essay every possible means of conciliation in order to persuade the Porte, we proposed to the other Cabinets to draw a special protocol, comprising the most essential conditions of the Constantinople conference, and to invite the Turkish government to adhere to this international act, which states the extreme limits of our peaceful demands. But our expectation was not fulfilled. The Porte did not defer to this unanimous wish of Christian Europe, and did not adhere to the conclusions of the protocol.

"Having exhausted pacific efforts, we are compelled by the haughty obstinacy of the Porte to proceed to more decisive acts, feeling that our equity and our own dignity enjoin it. By her refusal, Turkey places us under the necessity of having recourse to arms."

"Profoundly convinced of the justice of our cause, and humbly committing ourselves to the grace and help of the Most High, we make known to our faithful subjects that the moment foreseen when we pronounced words to which all Russia responded with complete unanimity has now arrived. We expressed the intention to act independently when we deemed it necessary, and when Russia's honor should demand it."

"In now invoking the blessing of God upon our valiant armies, we give them the order to cross the Turkish frontier."

A gigantic Russian army marched forth at the call of the Czar. One wing operated from Armenia, under the generalship of Loris Melikoff, and after fluctuating fortunes, it

finally invaded Kars and Erzerum in November; and the army of the South or the Pruth, commanded by Grand Duke Nicholas, crossed the Danube, reduced Plevna, marched on to San-Stefano, and concluded a treaty on the 3d of March, 1878. The loss of the warring countries was 225,000 men, and the cost over \$1,050,000,000.

The treaty of San-Stefano was declared, by England, to be too exorbitant an imposition upon the Turk, in that it created an extensive autonomous Bulgaria and annexed a wide Turkish territory to Russia. The Eastern horizon was once more darkened by energetic warlike preparations of England. Finally Russia assented to the submission of the treaty of San-Stefano to a European Congress, which met at Berlin and concluded the notable "Treaty of Berlin" on July 13, 1878.

The first twelve articles of the treaty deal with Bulgaria. The liberal provisions of the Russian treaty were attenuated and Bulgaria made an autonomous and tributary principality, under the suzerainty of the Sultan. The 13-22d Articles define the administrative regulations to be applied to Eastern Roumelia, and placed it under the direct political and military authority of the Sultan. This territory was included in Bulgaria, in the original treaty of San-Stefano. Eastern Roumelia united itself with the principality of Bulgaria, in 1885, for which Bulgaria pays an annual tribute of \$700,000 to the Porte.

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA were tributary to Servia or Hungary until 1376, when they established a monarchy. After the battle of Kossova, 1389, the country became a vassal of Turkey. The wide-spread disturbances of 1875 in those regions were strong factors leading to the Russo-Turkish war. By the treaty of San-Stefano the administration of the two provinces was to be regulated in accordance with a règlement to be drafted by an international commission. The XXVth Article of the treaty of Berlin entrusted the administration of the provinces to Austria-Hungary. The LVIIIth Article of the same treaty entrusted Austria with "the execution of the works which have for their object the removal of the obstacles which the Iron Gates and the Cataract place in the way of navigation, for which a provisional tax shall be levied." By the Xth and XXXVIIIth

articles Bulgaria and Servia were substituted to Turkey, in that they covenanted to recognize the contractual obligations of the latter to Austria, in regard to the Rustchuk-Varna Railway Company, and her right to extend a rail line to European Turkey—Novi-Bazar-Salonika. This provision of the treaty, which Austria recently attempted to effect, precipitated some heated discussion in the European Cabinets as being part of a political step, with an aggressive *arrière pensée*, at this unsettled state of things in Turkey. The query is:—has there been any period in the history of that country when the conditions were settled? The logical argument is that it savored of a bold audacity on the part of Austria to exercise a treaty right, while having failed in the observance of solemn obligations assumed by the same instrument.

By the LVIIIth and LXth Articles Russia was given, in addition to the indemnity, the important territories of Ardahan, Kars, and Batoum.

By the LXIst Article the Sultan undertook to carry out certain reforms in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians and to report to the Powers the steps thus taken, "who well superintended their application."

Following the treaty of Berlin, Great Britain and the Porte entered into a defensive alliance, signed June 4, 1878, whereby England "engages to join the Sultan to resist by force of arms any Russian attempt against the Ottoman territory," whereupon the Sultan promised "to introduce reforms to be agreed upon later between the two powers, into the government and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories; and in order to enable England to make necessary provision for executing her engagement, the Sultan further assigns the Island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England."

The obligations assumed by the Powers, under the treaty of Berlin, were superseded by the prospect of commercial expansion and territorial aggrandizement. The German Emperor became the first to establish himself in the heart of the Sultan. During the bloodiest era of the Hamidian rule, immediately after the Armenian massacres, the Great Kaiser visited Constantinople, Oct. 6, 1898, and for six days enjoyed

the extravagant hospitality of the Turk, at the expense of the overtaxed Christians. In royal pomp and splendor he proceeded to Palestine. At Damascus, the Christian Emperor was so deeply touched by the Turkish demonstrations of affection, that, carried away by an impulse of gratitude, he said: "May His Imperial Majesty the Sultan and the 300,000,000 Mussulmans throughout the world rest assured that at all times the German Emperor is their friend." Not long before, Germany had declared that "the Eastern Question was not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier."

The impudent and indiscreet declaration of William II, characteristic of his eccentric mental mechanism, created intense displeasure in the Christian world, particularly in England, for it was primarily directed against the British rule in India, where there are 67,000,000 of Mussulmans. Germany since has boldly thwarted all British attempts to influence the Sultan for the improvement of his government.

German interests and German diplomacy have predominantly superseded the long-established British influence in Turkey. German colonies are being settled in Syria and Palestine; German commercial agents are canvassing throughout the land; German generals and officers are in the Turkish employ; guns, ammunition, cannon are supplied by Germany. Postal, quay, railway concessions are being granted to German companies. The Anatolian Railway Company, under German control, will build or is building a line from Constantinople to the Persian Gulf, a distance of 2,500 kilometres, the Turkish government paying a specific sum per each kilometre.

Russia secured concession to build a line from Kars to Erzerum, and France, 1900, from Damascus to Hamah. Austria and Italy participated in the distribution of the bounty, for their passivity in the bloody work of the Turk. **THUS, THE BERLIN TREATY BECAME AN INSTRUMENT OF EXTORTION.**

Since the treaty of Berlin the "concert" or interference of Europe in the "Eastern Question" has been occasioned by the constant uprisings and bloodshed throughout the Ottoman dominions, resulting from the intolerable Hamidian tyranny and his inauguration of the policy of Pan-Islamism.

Confined to Yildiz Kiosk, the "Sick Man" of the "East," confident of the discord of Europe, centralized the administra-

tion of the country in his palace. With audacious severity he trampled upon all his treaty obligations, and impelled by that inborn fanaticism which has characterized his rule, he dismissed Christian functionaries, suppressed the press, closed hundreds of Christian schools, prohibited all public assemblages, levied exorbitant and illegal taxes, entrusted their collection to the police, thus establishing a more tragic era of poverty and decadence. Thereupon, the British government made strong representations at the Porte against the inhuman practices perpetrated upon the Christians, to which the Sultan responded by an atrocious massacre of 10,000 unarmed Armenians in the district of Sassoun, in Feb., 1894. Following a consular investigation the crime was established, despite the denials of the Sultan, when Gladstone launched his expressive epithet of "Great Assassin" of the Orient. To the credit of England, the Salisbury government despatched a fleet to the Dardanelles, and demanded the organization of a "Permanent High Commission" for the administration of the country. France at first supported England, but receded eventually from fear of offending the Russian Bear, who sustained the defence and policy of the Turk. Then followed the most ghastly butchery of 300,000 men, women and children throughout the land, to the everlasting shame of European civilization.

CRETE became the next unavoidable object that engaged the attention of Europe, following the Armenian conflagration. The Island has a population of 200,000 of which only 40,000 are Mussulmans, and the rest Greeks. When Greece became independent, insurrection was in full sway in Crete. The Sultan handed over the Islanders to Mehemet Ali, in lieu of his services, who subdued them through stringent measures. He was forced out by Europe, however, in 1868, and the Sultan granted them an "Organic Law" which he never respected. The XXIII^d Article of the treaty of Berlin extended and ratified the "law" of 1868. The Island became, however, a perpetual hotbed of plots and bloodshed. Many Grecian committees and bands instigated widespread rebellion against the Sultan's rule. The propaganda grew to such wide dimensions that King George of Greece issued a proclamation, declaring the annexation of the Island to Greece, and despatched a flotilla for that purpose, in Feb., 1897. The

powers categorically disapproved the impudence of Greece, and prevented the landing of the Grecian expedition on the Island, forcing the exit of that already landed. In the height of excitement and anger, many Greek bands carried raids to the frontiers of the Turkish territory. The Sultan declared war against Greece on the 17th April, and by a few decisive battles invaded Thessaly. Greece sued for peace on the 17th May. The Powers intervened, and against the protest of the Sultan, rectified the Grecian frontier and fixed the indemnity at \$20,000,000, half of which the Sultan appropriated to the equipment of his army, and the other half to the payment of his arrears on the Russian indemnity of 1878.

During a period of two years' standstill, the Powers established a provisional government in Crete, and finally secured an acceptable candidate for governor in Prince George of Greece, who assumed office as High Commissioner in Dec., 1898. The general supervision of the Island was entrusted to an "International Committee of Powers" sitting at Rome. On March 16, 1899, the constitution was ratified, and Greek was adopted as the official language of the Island.

THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION has been another most important source of anxiety to the European Chancelleries, and threatened an international outbreak many a time. This question derives its importance from the geographical situation of the country and the racial and religious affinities of the Macedonian to the contiguous independent States. The country inhabited by the Macedonians is an important section of European Turkey, where Mohammedans predominate, with a goodly number of Greeks and Roumanians. The Macedonians, so-called, are really Bulgarians, numbering from 250-500,000, the remnants of the Great Bulgarian Monarchy of the 10th century. Following the decline of Bulgaria in the 11th century, the country was extensively depopulated, and passed under the successive rules of Boniface, Marquis of Montserrat, Byzantium, Servia; and the Ottoman Turks conquered it in the 1st decade of the 15th century. Its political and economic conditions are, in common with the whole of the country, in utter destitution. The situation is intensified by the increasing animosity of the Macedonians towards the Greeks, and vice versa. Although belonging to the same church, they entertain opposite political

ambitions and opinion as to the future of the country. The Greeks look forward with impatience to the annexation of the territory to Greece, as a legitimate part of ancient Byzantium; whereas the Macedonians are in constant struggle to shake off the Turkish yoke and unite with Bulgaria. There is an intense feeling of sympathy in Bulgaria for the lot of their co-religionists. More than half of the population of Sofia and the army of Bulgaria are Macedonians. Many Bulgarian bands organized, crossed the Turkish frontier and precipitated armed revolution in Macedonia, in 1901. Bulgaria was warned by the Powers and the Porte as to the probable consequences of her subterranean coöperation with the rebels, as all the leaders were Bulgarian army officers. The entire districts of Adrianople, Monastir and Salonika were turned over to unchecked anarchy and bloodshed, in 1903, when a conflict between Turkey and Bulgaria seemed imminent. The Emperors of Austria and Russia met in the same year at Wurtzberg, and agreed upon a programme, which provided for the appointment of an Inspector General of Finance, and a Christian Chief of Gendarmerie. The Austro-Russian scheme, although in force, is an absolute failure to-day, and Macedonia is the center of rekindling outbreaks and abominable misrule.

No one single question in the world's history has been the source of perpetual international conflicts and pathetic human struggle against tyranny and treachery, as has the "Eastern Question." The importance of the "Question" springs from the necessity of the concurrence of the members of the "European Concert" for the solution of all the difficulties which continually arise from that source and the apparent impossibility of effecting harmony among them. This unfortunate dissension, due to their irreconcilable interests in the "East," might at any moment assume a serious phase, implicating the contestants in a general armed conflict.

The Turk is incapable of maintaining a civilized system of laws in that heterogeneous country. The absolute incompatibility of Mohammedan institutions with Christian civilization has been emphatically demonstrated in the constant broils and turmoils of the Turk with the subject races. No nation in the history of the world has ever conquered so many

countries and races within two hundred years, none has proven itself so incapable to govern, develop and unite the conquered. No nation has maintained for centuries so uniform a tyrannical machine as the Turk, forced to release the custody of six races in 100 years.

All preliminary stages of procedure to correct Hamid have been tried. Appeals, exhortations, remonstrances, naval demonstrations have been resorted to, without any desirable effect; now, the time for the actual exercise of force has come. Humanity and the economic interest of the world alike demand the removal of the cancer of the Turk from the heart of civilization.

The Ottoman Empire of the Twentieth Century

BY VAHAN CARDASHIAN

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